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ABSTRACT

Universities and colleges accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education are facing the prospects of measuring dispositions related to teaching. Dispositions selected for teacher candidates at the University of West Alabama are characteristics desirable in N-12 candidates. This pilot study was designed to assess attitudes toward these dispositions. The sample consisted of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, administrators, and college/university professors. These participants completed the Survey of Dispositions of Inservice and Preservice Teachers (SDIPT). The SDIPT is a 5-point Likert-type scale with 40 items anchored by strongly agree and disagree. Demographic information obtained from participants included age ranges, groups, years of experience, and work assignment. Responses to the item were compared across groups, across age ranges, and by years of experience. Results indicated that attitudes toward dispositions did not vary as a function of the demographic characteristics. Recommendations for future practice are outlined and implications for further research are provided. (Contains 17 references.) (Author/SM)

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Attitudes Toward Dispositions Related to Teaching of Pre-service Teachers, In-service Teachers, Administrators, and College/University Professors

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Abstract

Universities and colleges accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) are facing the prospects of measuring dispositions related to teaching. Dispositions selected for teacher candidates at The University of West Alabama are characteristics desirable in N-12 candidates. This pilot study was designed to assess attitudes toward these dispositions. The sample consisted of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, administrators, and college/university professors. These participants completed the Survey of Dispositions of Inservice and Preservice Teachers (SDIPT). The SDIPT is 5-point Likert-type scale with 40 items anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree. Demographic information obtained from participants included age ranges, groups, years of experience, and work assignment. Responses to the items were compared across groups, across age ranges, and by years of experience. Results indicated that attitudes toward dispositions did not vary as a function of the demographic characteristics. Recommendations for future practice are outlined and implications for further research are provided.

Attitudes Toward Dispositions Related to Teaching of Pre-service Teachers, In-service Teachers, Administrators, and College/University Professors

In recent years, dispositions toward teaching have become important in the education of teacher candidates. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002) and the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC, 1992) have promoted the concept of dispositions as essential to highly qualified teachers' success in the classroom. Colleges of Education have become the center of the promotion of and assessment of dispositions toward teaching, as well as the production of teachers who are skilled in content areas and in pedagogy. The implications for such assessment of dispositions are profound, since this area is by nature subjective and is often dictated by personal philosophies. There are specific problems that exist for an assessment of dispositions; one is, of course, bias. In order to prevent possible bias in the assessment of dispositions, it is necessary to consider the nature of dispositions, the definition of disposition, and the best way to measure selected dispositions objectively.

This study examined the selected dispositions of a College of Education (COE) at a small university in west Alabama. Through a committee process the COE selected 11 dispositions expected of teacher candidates who graduate from any degree program related to education. These dispositions included:

- Collaborates with peers, supervisors, parents, students, and others;
- Applies knowledge and pedagogy, including technology, in all teaching areas and promotes achievement among P-12 students;

- Demonstrates inquiry by posing questions and thinking critically when planning and making other decisions;
- Reflects by thoughtfully examining conditions, attitudes, and educational practices which may enhance or impede student achievement;
- Responds to the needs of all learners by respecting the individuality of each student and planning instructional activities to maximize each student's achievement;
- Exhibits professionalism which embodies a strong commitment to on-going professional development, ethical conduct, and student advocacy;
- Demonstrates reliability by completing assignments, duties, and tasks on time;
- Communicates with confidence and clarity;
- Demonstrates confidence in the students' abilities to succeed and routinely communicates high expectations;
- Exhibits enthusiasm and compassion; and
- Is technologically proficient.

Selection of these dispositions was based on a research process that examined the dispositions selected by other institutions and the College of Education's Practical Experience Model. A six-member committee determined that these dispositions were already an integral part of the expectations of teacher-candidates. However, the dispositions were integrated into the teacher characteristics in a way that was not as clearly obvious as the NCATE requirements desired. To determine how individuals involved with the Teacher Education program considered the dispositions, a survey was designed to obtain input on the relevance of the committee's selected dispositions.

Definitions of Dispositions

Research into the definition and nature of dispositions revealed that NCATE (2002) defines dispositions as

> The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment (p. 53).

INTASC (1992) developed a "common core of teaching knowledge" (p. 3) containing 10 principles categorized into knowledge, dispositions, and performance standards. Dispositions were identified for each standard and given specific importance in the evaluation of excellent and effective teaching. Analysis of INTASC standards included the following verbs related to dispositions: realizes, seeks, appreciates, has enthusiasm, is committed, shows, takes, responds, recognizes, understands, believes, persists, values, respects, is sensitive to, makes feel valued, and adopts. Though dispositions were clearly outlined for the INTASC areas, it is the NCATE definition that is most used by institutions today.

Other definitions related to specific dispositions have been constructed over the past decades. In *How We Think*, Dewey (1910) discussed the teacher's need to study the traits and habits of students to assist in the modification of individual powers in the direction of the materials to be learned and the mental training that made reactions

habitual. Dewey (1910) said: "Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which he does it, incites the child to respond in some way or other, and each response tends to set the child's attitude in some way (par. 47). He further stated that

> The operation of the teacher's own mental habits tends, unless carefully watched and guided, to make the child a student of the teacher's peculiarities rather than of the subjects that he is supposed to study. His chief concern is to accommodate himself to what the teacher expects of him, rather than to devote himself energetically to the problems of subject matter. "Is this right?" comes to mean "Will this answer or this process satisfy the teacher?" –instead of meaning, "Does it satisfy the inherent conditions of the problem?" (Paragraphs 48-49).

When we consider Dewey's statements, it reminds us that children respond directly to the dispositions and attitudes of the teacher; therefore, it is necessary to determine which dispositions, attitudes, or habits of mind are best for the students involved in the education process.

In sessions from The First Annual Symposium on Education Dispositions, Usher (2002) examined Arthur W. Combs' publication, *Being and Becoming: A Field Approach to Psychology (1999).* Usher (2002) has reformulated Combs' areas of belief into dispositions. Usher (2002) defines disposition as "The qualities that characterize a person as an individual: the controlling perceptual (mental, emotional, spiritual) qualities that determine the person's natural or usual ways of thinking and acting" (Session Q). Usher's (2002) list of dispositions for effective teachers includes: empathy, positive view of others, positive view of self, authenticity, and meaningful purpose and vision. In his

discussions from the Symposium, Usher (2002) reflects on teacher dispositions in the following way:

> Dispositions are not behaviors. They do not exist as distinct entities of actions or thoughts, or traits. Rather, they represent the ways in which an individual has stocked, structured and ordered his or her psyche or mind; or, in the language of the theoretical underpinnings of Combs and this associate, his or her *perceptual field*.
>
> Dispositions are determiners of behavior though not in a one-to-one way. They are constellations of personal meanings from which behaviors spring and thus they do determine the probability of effectiveness for one's professional choices and behaviors. As such dispositions are not open to direct measurement, however, dispositions can be inferred and inferences can be subjected to standards of validity and reliability for use in research and other measurement tasks.
>
> Dispositions are also not open to direct change from or by the environment though they can change in the same ways that all human changes occur: through changes in one's physical, spiritual, emotional, and cognitive functioning that necessitates dispositional reconstruction. (pp.1-2).

Usher (2002) further discusses the effectiveness of dispositions when teacher education candidates so disposed are encouraged to continue in their pursuits of a teaching career. He also suggests that education is finally discovering the efficacy of Combs' views of the helping professions. It is the internal view, the view of others, the view of goals and purposes, and the view of the world in general that motivates an effective teacher.

Levine (2002) of West Virginia State College, another guest at The First Annual Symposium on Educator Dispositions, defines dispositions toward teaching as

> the attitudes, inclinations, and personal attributes or qualities that candidates hold toward teaching, learning, working with children and adolescents, and being a part of the professional field of education. These 'dispositions toward teaching' are the inner views, the values, and propensities that support people becoming strong and effective teachers. Compassion toward others, curiosity, attention to detail, and perseverance could be examples of such dispositions (p. 2).

Katz (1988) defined dispositions as "a very different type of learning from skills and knowledge. They can be thought of as habits of mind, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways" (p. 30). To explore the implications of observation of dispositions, Katz (1993) stated, "A disposition is a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is directed toward a broad goal (p. 1). Katz's use of the term "habits of mind" is reflected in other definitions and in many other studies that related to dispositions. Katz (1993) also indicated that dispositions merit research to determine which have the most important outcomes for education; to Katz (1993), the most important disposition was the disposition to go on learning.

All NCATE accredited universities are presently incorporating or have incorporated dispositions into their assessment frameworks of pre-service teachers. Despite the variety and direction of definitions, measurement of dispositions must be undertaken to accommodate the requirements found in the new NCATE standards.

Dispositions Toward Learning

Carr and Claxton (2002) contributed much to the assessment of learning dispositions. They developed a "learning disposition grid" and also a "learning disposition portfolio" designed to help track and assess the growth of dispositions over time. They presented the idea that dispositions may be situated or appear only in the presence of certain triggers. Also, dispositions may be related to different kinds of tasks, contexts, and materials. People who are developing dispositions under these circumstances do so depending on their opportunities to utilize a disposition and discover its value. Of interest to Carr and Claxton is the possibility that observation or "testing" elicits the disposition even though it is not a part of the individual's natural practice. Dispositions do not remain fixed in an individual's repertoire of skills. They may become more complex and subtle or may be extinguished and replaced by other dispositions. When examining learning dispositions and their manifestations, it is necessary to consider the milieu of situations. Learning occurs on different levels and in different time schemes, making it difficult to assess dispositions toward learning. According to Carr and Claxton, "A disposition is neither unique to a specific situation nor generally manifested across all situations. It is a tendency to respond or learn in a certain way that is somewhat, but incompletely, 'disembedded' from particular constellations of personal, social and material detail" (p. 12). If dispositions are defined in this developmental fashion, they may vary in robustness and sophistication.

There is and has been no clear agreement on which dispositions are most important in learning. A number of lists have been developed. For example, Goleman (1996) listed seven dispositions that are important in knowing how to learn; he included

such terms as communication, cooperation, self-control, relatedness, curiosity, confidence, and intentionality. Carr and Claxton (2002) included reflection, conviviality, opportunism, mindfulness, curiosity, resilience, experimentation, and selectivity. Some dispositions from these two lists might be subordinate to others rather than individual entities. The following dispositions were chosen by Carr and Claxton (2002) because they are subject to assessment. *Resilience* is the inclination to preserve on tasks when the outcome is not certain and in spite of confusion or frustration. A resilient individual overcomes challenges and comes back to the learning task. Key indicators of resilience are "sticking with a difficult learning task; having a relatively high tolerance for frustration without getting upset; being able to recover from setback of disappointment relatively quickly" (p. 14). *Playfulness* means being able to construct variations in learning situations through creative interpretation and reaction to problems. Imagination is the primary factor in playfulness. The individual who exhibits this characteristic generally is able to think outside of the box and examine entities with a mischievous attitude. *Reciprocity* is another disposition selected by Carr and Claxton (2002). Individuals who are placed in a situation where communication is reciprocated are more likely to interact successfully with people. These individuals are willing to collaborate and accept others' perspectives.

In considering the assessment of learning dispositions, Carr and Claxton (2002) sought to determine reliable and valid ways of assessing and tracking their development. Criteria for the assessment system included procedures that were manageable, practical, reliable, valid, and flexible. The assessment procedures also should encourage the development of dispositions. Assessments might be conducted through observation,

checklists, learning stories, interviews, questionnaires, self-reports, or portfolios. The Learning Disposition Grid, developed by Carr and Claxton (2002), situates assessment with social contexts. The Learning Disposition Portfolio tracks the development of dispositions from early childhood through lifelong learning. Carr and Claxton recommend research on the development of dispositions in multiple settings and under multiple assessment procedures.

In response to Carr and Claxton, Sadler (2002) questioned whether learning dispositions could be assessed. One area that Sadler (2002) considered was the difference between *capabilities* and *dispositions*. He contended that dispositions and capabilities interact and reinforce one another. He noted that Carr and Claxton suggested that dispositions should receive the same attention as do capabilities in the development of skills in learning. Successful learning features a series of loops that help to improve future dispositions to learn. Dispositions are not an enduring characteristic but are situational. Because dispositions to learn something for a particular benefit are produced by key determinants, Sadler (2002) contended that attempting to engender dispositions to learn without including attention to the goal and significance of the learning to the learner will likely produce disappointing results. Much of schooling attempts to produce learning that is not necessarily interesting to the learner. Sadler (2002) stated: "Although process, procedure, attitude, disposition and skill are all instrumental in achieving a goal, it is the goal itself that gives the learning meaning" (p. 47). Changes in dispositions can occur spontaneously and at any time during lifelong learning; therefore, it is questionable whether dispositions differ from motivations under necessity. Sadler (2002) further questioned whether dispositions should be assessed. He noted that Carr and Claxton's

reasoning concerning assessment of dispositions held only under restricted conditions. Apparently, the assessment process does drive the importance of conditions and constructs. Certain outcomes of the educational process are easier to assess and are more often the target of evaluation; however, these targets are often easier to evaluate because they are less cognitively complex and more superficial. Deeper and subtler outcomes are often ignored because they are more difficult to assess, thus, skewing curricula and distorting them. Assessment should be curriculum neutral and then valued outcomes could be comprehensively and adequately assessed. Learning dispositions enable or impact learning; they are situational, content-driven, volatile and uncertain. However, it is in the area of teacher dispositions that Sadler (2002) questioned the positions of Carr and Claxton most strongly. He stated that Carr and Claxton did not mention this in their consideration of learning dispositions; furthermore, the successive nature of the educational process would give rise to discontinuities for students moving from one year of learning to the next. According to Sadler (2002), teachers should model the appropriate dispositions toward lifelong learning to produce similar dispositions in learners. Sadler (2002) identified the desirable teacher learning dispositions as "persistence, recovery from setbacks and failures, imagination and improvisation, experimentation, lateral thinking, confidence in tacking the unknown, self-control, infectious enthusiasm for learning, dedication to learning for mastery, joy in emerging capability, goal-directedness, palpable curiosity and conviviality" (p. 50). These dispositions cannot be practiced as tasks for mastery and must be visible to students to become enablers of the learners' own skills. Which dispositions should be singled out and labeled as critical for learners in general? How are such dispositions selected? Is

there overlap among the most critical dispositions? Sadler (2002) noted that there are many routes to success and that different people utilize their dispositions in different ways; goal-directedness focuses a particular repertoire of dispositions to achieve success. Sadler (2002) stated that there is an inherent danger in focusing on the assessment on particular characteristics and ignoring the process by which learning occurs. Should it be possible to measure dispositions unambiguously, a satisfactory assessment could be obtained; however, focusing too deeply on a single subset of variables in teaching and learning produces little advantage and insufficient knowledge for teacher educators.

Dispositions Toward Teaching

According to Wenzlaff (1996), "Teacher characteristics, attitudes, conceptions of self, and intellectual and interpersonal dispositions in large measure determine both the explicit and the hidden curriculum of the classroom" (p. 1). Formal curricula are represented by the courses of study, lesson plans, materials, and instructional methodology found in the classroom; informal curricula contribute to school climate or atmosphere which is largely based on the teacher's personality. Furthermore, teacher effectiveness is derived from dispositions as impetus for teaching and learning. With this in mind, colleges of teacher education should help pre-service teachers "realize their beliefs about teaching and dispositions desired for effective teaching" (p. 2). Wenzlaff (1996) recognized that teacher dispositions and their definitions are inconsistent in the literature. She used the definition provided by Katz (1993), but she also referred to dispositions as habits of mind, temperament, and personality.

Wenzlaff (1996) examined teacher education programs and dispositions in relation to the standards proposed by NCATE and INTASC. In learning to teach, beliefs

are important determiners of successful completion of a teacher education program. Beliefs affect how teacher candidates learn and how they change as they become more educated. In the classroom, pre-service teachers discover more clearly how their dispositions will affect their students. By keeping a portfolio, teacher candidates can engage in the reflection and self-evaluation that will produce understanding of personal dispositions and the extent of their influence. By understanding the beliefs, skills, and dispositions of teacher candidates, teacher educators are able to guide the candidates through the teacher education program and foster positive dispositions that will be productive in teaching and learning. Self-examination, reflection, determination of beliefs and values are part of teacher candidates' maturity and are indicators of the type of teachers they will become.

Giovannelli (2003) investigated the relationship between having a reflective disposition toward teaching and being an effective teacher. Her investigation provided evidence that teacher candidates who reflect on their practice are considered to be more effective by their university supervisors. Giovannelli (2003) used the definition of reflection from LaBosky (1994). According to Giovannelli (2003), LaBosky viewed reflection as "constant reconsideration, which replaces unsubstantiated opinion, demands 'thoughtful, caring decision making wherein educators are able to move beyond the tendencies of their own biographies and the apparent mandates of their current circumstances to envision and consider alternative interpretations and possibilities" (p. 9). Giovannelli (2003) derived her instrument from materials used by LaBosky and conducted a study that identified a relationship between reflective practice and effective teaching. She examined variations in reflective dispositions in a group of 55 teacher

candidates from a large urban university. Her convenience sample was predominately female but was diverse with respect to ethnicity and age. She hypothesized that reflective dispositions was related to effective teaching. Her reflective dispositions included "making decisions and formulating ideas about educational goals, practices, and outcomes that are subjected to careful reconsideration in light of information from current theory and practice" (as cited in LaBosky, 1994, p. 300). Variables for the study were classroom management, instructional behavior, classroom organization, and teacher expectations. Only classroom management turned out to be unrelated to reflective dispositions toward teaching. The sample reflected on what teachers should know and be able to do, on teaching, on learning, on the relationship between teaching and learning, on what it would be like to be a teacher in the classroom, and effective teaching. Based on these findings, Giovannelli (2003) provided policy recommendations, which included that colleges and universities should consider the attitudes, values, beliefs and emotions of teacher candidate applicants in the admission process. Furthermore, she recommended that teacher education programs include activities and experiences to promote a reflective disposition in teacher candidates. Because of the emphasis on dispositions over the past two decades, standards for teacher quality should continue to include a reflective disposition toward teaching.

Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, and James (2002) investigated the educational beliefs of pre-service teachers and their view of effective teacher characteristics. This study sought to determine if the teacher candidates' educational beliefs were transmissive or progressive. Because of the evidence that the characteristics pre-service teachers bring with them have an effect on their subsequent development, the authors proposed to

engage teacher candidates in self-reflection. Participants in the study were pre-service teachers (n = 134) from a large university in Georgia. Most participants were female and white. According to Minor et al. (2002), teacher candidates' perceptions represented a multidimensional construct. Seven themes emerged from the data that indicated preservice teachers' perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers: student centered, enthusiastic about teaching, professional, knowledgeable about subject, competent instructor, effective classroom and behavior manager, and ethical. Further, a relatively small proportion (12.7%) of pre-service teachers were progressive, characterized by such elements as facilitator, guide, and motivator; presenter of holistic curricula related to students' experiences; innovator and director of students' problem solving skills; and promoter of active learning. A larger proportion of teacher candidates (28.4%) were transmissive, typified by more traditional or conservative teaching styles, using lecture and demonstration, following the textbooks and courses of study, and using teacher-centered techniques. The majority of the teacher candidates (59.0%) demonstrated an eclectic approach to teaching, probably because their dominant educational beliefs had not yet matured. Minor et al. recommended that teacher candidates begin to explore their own dispositions toward teaching as early as possible in their educational programs and that teacher educators should encourage a continuous exploration of their growth. Also, a continuous assessment of such growth should be aligned with the standards promoted by INTASC and NCATE and included in teacher candidates' portfolios.

Legal Issues

Examination of the legal issues regarding admission and retention policies for teacher education in universities was instituted by Ginsberg and Whaley (2003) to

determine if there was a consistent, uniform system being used. Twenty-seven universities responded to an on-line survey, yielding a 54% response rate. In the course of the study, the authors examined numerous court cases related to the legal climate regarding admission and retention in educational programs. Generally, the courts allowed the universities to rely on the academic judgment of professors and university officials. They also examined current practices in admission and retention in university programs. Though policies were not uniform throughout the sample, all institutions had firmly established guidelines for admission and informal guidelines for retention. Finally, they examined the issue of student dispositions for teaching in relationship to the current policies and reported that "whereas three-quarters of the teacher preparation institutions did report having policies regarding student dispositions, exactly what they are doing is unclear. Only thirty percent of the institutions reported using a disposition checklist or student-faculty conferences" (p. 184). Some institutions reported using a committee review, while others used a pre-admission letter to outline expected dispositions. Some other institutions were in the process of developing policies. Policies on dispositions appeared to be mostly informal and unclear. Ginsberg and Whaley (2003) stated,

> In terms of student dispositions, the practices in place seem to vary greatly, and it is not at all clear exactly how some institutions are examining these dispositions. Although the courts do grant professional educators a great deal of latitude in making academic decisions about issues like admission and retention, it is worrisome that the retention and disposition assessment policies are so inconsistent among institutions, with no established professional norms in place.

> Teacher preparation programs could be at risk for legal challenges until these policies are more clearly specified at the various colleges and universities. (pp. 185-186)

Teacher preparation programs must be willing to develop policies that address these important issues. Guidance is available through national organizations and accrediting bodies such as NCATE and INTASC.

The assessment of dispositions toward teaching carries weight with various entities, but it also carries significant baggage. Careful evaluation of practice and development of official, formal policies is necessary to protect the integrity and the legal position of teacher education programs. This study is designed to provide a basis for making such policy and for emplacing a standardized assessment program to assist teacher educators and teacher candidates in making sound decisions about progress and about effectively displaying appropriate dispositions. The following research questions were addressed: What are the attitudes of teacher candidates, in-service teachers, university professors, and K-12 administrators toward the selected dispositions of the College of Education? Do these attitudes vary as a function of age, teacher status, and experience in education?

Method

Participants

Participants for this study came from a population of students enrolled in graduate and undergraduate classes in the College of Education. As a convenience sample, students who chose to participate completed the instrument. A total of 147 individuals participated in the study, comprising undergraduate teacher candidates (73.47%), in-service teachers (12.24%), interns (12.24%), and college professors (2.04%). The vast majority of participants (85.03%) were aged between 18 and 30 years. The age distribution of the remaining sample members was 10.20% for the 31-40 years age group, 1.36% for the 41-50 years age group, and 3.40% for those 51 years of age and above. The amount of experience in the field of education for the sample members ranged from 1 year to 34 years ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 4.90$). However, the majority of students (82.99%) had no teaching experience.

Instruments

The instrument, entitled "Survey of Dispositions of In-Service and Pre-Service Teachers" (SDIPT), was developed specifically for this pilot study. The SDIPT consisted of 40 items that assess the dispositions of the respondent. Consistent with the recent recommendations of researchers (e.g., Barnette, 2000; Weems, Onwuegbuzie, & Collins, 2003) that instrument developers avoid including both positively and negatively worded statements within the same scale, all items in the SDIPT were positively worded. The response options represented 5-point Likert items, anchored by "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree." Thus, scores on the SDIPT ranged from 40 to 200. All items should be key-reversed such that high scores on the SDIPT suggest positive dispositions. For the

present study, the SDIPT generated scores for the combined sample that had a classical theory alpha reliability coefficient of .92 (95% Confidence Interval [CI] = .90, .94). This instrument is presented in Appendix A.

Procedures

After the dispositions were selected by the COE, the pilot instrument was constructed and its content validated by experts in the COE. Instruments were distributed and completed in various day and night classes of undergraduate and graduate students. Data then were entered and analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Scores on the SDIPT ranged from 107 to 200 (M = 159.71, SD = 16.80). The median score was 158.00. No statistical significant relationship was found between the numbers of years of experience in education and level of disposition, $r = .09$, $p > .05$. Further, no statistically significant difference ($t = 0.04$, $p > .05$) emerged in levels of dispositions between participants in the 18-30 age range (M = 159.73, SD = 17.21) and those who were 31 years or older (M = 159.99, SD = 14.61). Also, no statistically significant difference ($t = 1.61$, $p > .05$) emerged in levels of dispositions between pre-service teachers (M = 160.56, SD = 17.73) and in-service teachers (M = 155.00, SD = 12.69). These findings suggest that the sample was homogeneous with respect to their attitudes toward teacher dispositions.

Examining the individual items revealed some interesting findings. The percentage of sample members who provided positive responses to each of the 40 items on the SDIPT are presented in Table 1. This percentage was obtained by pooling the "agree" and "strongly agree" responses. It can be seen that Item 4 (i.e., "Teacher

dispositions should include punctuality and reliability") evoked the most positive responses, with 92.52% of the sample either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Of the 40 items, 7 induced positive responses from 90% or more of the participants: (a) "Teacher dispositions should include punctuality and reliability" (Item 4); (b) "Teacher dispositions should include enthusiasm and compassion" (Item 15); (c) "teacher dispositions should include routine communication of high expectations" (Item 16); (d) "Posing questions and thinking critically when planning and making other decisions is a positive disposition" (Item 19); (e) "Responding to the needs of all learners by respecting the individuality of each student is a desirable teacher disposition" (Item 20); (f) "Keeping up with changes in subject matter knowledge is a necessary disposition" (Item 32); and (g) "Establishing a positive classroom management plan and environment is part of a teacher's evidence of his/her dispositions" (Item 36). Interestingly, 39 of the 40 items received positive responses from the majority of sample members. Only Item 1 (i.e., 44.90% positive endorsement rate), received positive responses from less than 50% of the sample. This indicates that although the sample members, in general, had very positive attitudes toward teacher dispositions, they did not consider them as important as content/subject area knowledge.

Insert Table 1 about here

In summary, the SDIPT developed for this particular study appears to be a useful tool for assessing individuals' attitudes toward dispositions related to teaching. With a score reliability of .92, this instrument yielded scores in the present investigation that

were reliable. Thus, this measure should be used in future studies. For example, researchers could use this tool to investigate dispositions as a function of other demographic (e.g., gender, race), cognitive (e.g., academic achievement), and personality (e.g., self-esteem) variables. Expanding this line of research will help to increase our understanding of the attitudes of teacher candidates, in-service teachers, university professors, and K-12 administrators towards an array of dispositions. This, in turn would facilitate the development of standardized assessment frameworks that help teacher educators and teacher candidates alike to make effective decisions that will advance the field of education in general and the education of students in particular.

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Table 1

Percentage of Sample Members Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed to Each Item on the SDIPT

Item	% Agreement
1. Teacher dispositions are more important than content/subject area knowledge.	44.90
2. Teacher dispositions are crucial to the development of N-12 students' academic achievement.	80.95
3. Teacher dispositions should be considered as a part of professional evaluations.	82.31
4. Teacher dispositions should include punctuality and reliability.	92.52
5. Teacher dispositions should include willingness to collaborate with stakeholders.	76.71
6. Teacher dispositions should be measured often during the pre-service program of teacher education.	76.87
7. Measuring teacher dispositions is a subjective evaluation.	68.03
8. Teacher dispositions are subject to frequent change during pre-service activities.	68.97
9. Teachers and teacher candidates should strive to keep their dispositions from affecting their performance.	85.71
10. Measuring teacher dispositions is an invasion of privacy.	73.97
11. Teaching dispositions should be considered as early as admission to a teacher education program.	63.27
12. An individual without appropriate dispositions should be counseled to go into another type of career field.	50.34
13. Measured teacher dispositions should include communication: written and verbal.	81.63
14. Measured teacher dispositions should include favorable attitudes toward technological proficiency for both teacher and students.	76.87
15. Teacher dispositions should include enthusiasm and compassion.	91.84
16. Teacher dispositions should include demonstration of confidence in the students' abilities to succeed.	91.78
17. Teacher dispositions should include routine communication of high expectations.	88.44
18. A teacher should be able to reflect about conditions, attitudes and practices that may enhance or impede student achievement.	85.62
19. Posing questions and thinking critically when planning and making other decisions is a positive teacher disposition.	90.48
20. Responding to the needs of all learners by respecting the individuality of each student is a desirable teacher disposition.	91.16

Item	% Agreement
21. The exhibition of professionalism through on-going professional development, ethical conduct and student advocacy is a necessary disposition.	86.39
22. Teacher dispositions should include willingness to apply knowledge and pedagogy.	89.73
23. Teacher dispositions should directly correspond with the school's mission statement.	71.43
24. A school's faculty should have teachers who possess the essential dispositions for all classes.	87.76
25. Positive dispositions should be related to the school climate.	69.86
26. Professional development should be provided to promote analysis of and/or improvement of teacher dispositions.	80.82
27. Teacher dispositions are a strong indicator of character.	77.55
28. Moral attributes should be included in teacher dispositions.	72.79
29. A school faculty and staff should have a clear definition of each of the district's approved teacher dispositions.	74.83
30. Descriptions of teacher dispositions should be included in each teacher's portfolio.	66.67
31. There should be congruence between teacher dispositions and principal leadership dispositions.	74.83
32. Keeping up with changes in subject matter knowledge is a necessary disposition.	91.16
33. Continuously apprising students of their weaknesses is a necessary disposition.	77.55
34. Sensitivity to differing personal and family backgrounds is a necessary disposition.	82.99
35. Sensitivity to community and cultural norms is a necessary disposition.	86.39
36. Establishing a positive classroom management plan and environment is part of a teacher's evidence of his/her dispositions.	91.10
37. Acceptance of students' specific modes of communication is a necessary disposition.	82.88
38. Use of body language, verbal prompts, and eye contact is a part of a teacher's dispositions.	89.04
39. Teacher dispositions are usually associated with positive teacher-student relationships.	85.62
40. Teacher dispositions are only a minor part of what contributes to being a highly qualified teacher.	65.52

Appendix A

Survey of Dispositions of In-Service and Pre-service Teachers

Survey of Dispositions of In-service and Pre-service Teachers
SDIPT
Dianne Richardson, Ed.D.

Groups: Please circle the appropriate group representation – ED 300, ED 331, Pre-service teachers (interns), in-service teachers, administrators, college/university professors

Age ranges: Please place a check mark by the appropriate age range:
____18-30
____31-40
____41-50
____51 and above

Experience: Please indicate your years of experience in education: _____

Subject/content/grade level: Please indicate what you teach, hope to teach, or the scope of your professional
assignment_____

Please fill in the number of your response in the blank to the right of the statement number.

1 strongly agree
2 agree
3 unsure
4 disagree
5 strongly disagree

1. _____Teacher dispositions are more important than content/subject area knowledge.
2. _____Teacher dispositions are crucial to the development of N-12 students' academic achievement.
3. _____Teacher dispositions should be considered as a part of professional evaluations.
4. _____Teacher dispositions should include punctuality and reliability.
5. _____Teacher dispositions should include willingness to collaborate with stakeholders.
6. _____Teacher dispositions should be measured often during the pre-service program of teacher education.
7. _____Measuring teacher dispositions is a subjective evaluation.
8. _____Teacher dispositions are subject to frequent change during pre-service activities.
9. _____Teachers and teacher candidates should strive to keep their dispositions from affecting their performance.
10. _____Measuring teacher dispositions is an invasion of privacy.

11. _____Teaching dispositions should be considered as early as admission to a teacher education program.
12. _____An individual without appropriate dispositions should be counseled to go into another type of career field.
13. _____Measured teacher dispositions should include communication: written and verbal.
14. _____Measured teacher dispositions should include favorable attitudes toward technological proficiency for both teacher and students.
15. _____Teacher dispositions should include enthusiasm and compassion.
16. _____Teacher dispositions should include demonstration of confidence in the students' abilities to succeed.
17. _____Teacher dispositions should include routine communication of high expectations.
18. _____A teacher should be able to reflect about conditions, attitudes and practices that may enhance or impede student achievement.
19. _____Posing questions and thinking critically when planning and making other decisions is a positive teacher disposition.
20. _____Responding to the needs of all learners by respecting the individuality of each student is a desirable teacher disposition.
21. _____The exhibition of professionalism through on-going professional development, ethical conduct and student advocacy is a necessary disposition.
22. _____Teacher dispositions should include willingness to apply knowledge and pedagogy.
23. _____Teacher dispositions should directly correspond with the school's mission statement.
24. _____A school's faculty should have teachers who possess the essential dispositions for all classes.
25. _____Positive dispositions should be related to the school climate.
26. _____Professional development should be provided to promote analysis of and/or improvement of teacher dispositions.
27. _____Teacher dispositions are a strong indicator of character.
28. _____Moral attributes should be included in teacher dispositions.
29. _____A school faculty and staff should have a clear definition of each of the district's approved teacher dispositions.
30. _____Descriptions of teacher dispositions should be included in each teacher's portfolio.
31. _____There should be congruence between teacher dispositions and principal leadership dispositions.
32. _____Keeping up with changes in subject matter knowledge is a necessary disposition.
33. _____Continuously apprising students of their weaknesses is a necessary disposition.
34. _____Sensitivity to differing personal and family backgrounds is a necessary disposition.
35. _____Sensitivity to community and cultural norms is a necessary disposition.

36. _____Establishing a positive classroom management plan and environment is part of a teacher's evidence of his/her dispositions.
37. _____Acceptance of students' specific modes of communication is a necessary disposition.
38. _____Use of body language, verbal prompts, and eye contact is a part of a teacher's dispositions.
39. _____Teacher dispositions are usually associated with positive teacher-student relationships.
40. _____Teacher dispositions are only a minor part of what contributes to being a highly qualified teacher.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Consent Form

Survey of Dispositions of In-service and Pre-service Teachers

Dr. Dianne Richardson
The University of West Alabama
Spring, 2003

Project Title: Survey of Dispositions of In-service and Pre-service Teachers

1. What is the purpose of the study? **The purpose of the study is to determine the importance of various dispositions to successful teacher performance. Surveys will be collected from a variety of sources: pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, administrators, and college/university professors. The survey is derived from INTASC and NCATE suggested dispositions and dispositions selected as representative of the candidates from the Julia Tutwiler College of Teacher Education, The University of West Alabama, Livingston, Alabama.**
2. How was I chosen? **You were selected as a convenience sample from the population of students at the University of West Alabama. Your attendance in a graduate or undergraduate class at UWA made it possible to consider you as a participant in this study.**
3. What will be involved in participating? **You will be asked to complete a survey instrument that consists of 40 statements related to teacher dispositions. You will also complete a demographic data sheet.**
4. Who will know what I say? **The surveys require no names or identification other than to check pre-service, in-service, administrator, or college/university, age range, and professional assignment. All materials will be held by the researcher who will be the only individual to know what classes participated in providing information. The name of the university will be used in publications, which might allow someone to infer your identity.**
5. What risks and benefits are associated with participation? **I do not foresee any risks to you other than a possible breach of confidentiality. All materials collected will be destroyed after one year. The possible benefits include personal reflection on the characteristics of highly qualified teachers regarding dispositions. One other benefit will accrue to the university in providing information to NCATE for the purposes of accreditation.**
6. What are my rights as a respondent? **You may ask any questions regarding the research, and they will be answered fully. Your participation in the study is voluntary; you may choose not to complete the instrument when it is administered.**
7. What will be published? **Results of the survey will be combined with other administrations of the survey to provide information to NCATE for the 2006 Site Visit. I will submit a proposal to present the results of this pilot administration of the survey at Mid-South Educational Research Association's Annual Convention, November 2003. I will submit articles to peer-reviewed journals for consideration for publication.**
8. If I want more information, whom can I contact about the study? **This study has been approved by The University of West Alabama's Internal Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. This board can be contacted through the office of Mrs. Patricia Pratt at (205) 652-3550. In addition, you may contact me at (205) 652-3440.**

_____ _____

Gloria D. Richardson, Project Director **Respondent Signature, date**

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Signature: Dianne Richardson	Printed Name/Position/Title: DIANNE RICHARDSON, Asst. Prof.
Organization/Address: The U. of West Alabama, Station 33, Livingston, AL 35470	Telephone: 205 652-3440 FAX: 205 652-3701
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